

Delaware Division of the  Arts

Delaware State Arts Council Meeting Minutes  
September 19, 2012  
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Possum Point Players, Georgetown

Attending: Council: Lise Monty, Lou Braithwaite, Joann Browning, Lori Crawford, Richard Givens II, Margaret Johnson, Gail Lear, Jon Newsom, Carol Rothschild, John Sarro, Ruth Sokolowski, Catherine Walls, Mack Wathen, Carson Zullinger  
Staff: Paul Weagraff, Susan Salkin, Terry Plummer, Kristin Pleasanton, Roxanne Stanulis, Dana Wise  
Guest: Guillermina Gonzalez, Delaware Arts Alliance

Absent: Ralph Kuebler, Elisabeth Poole

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Minutes were approved from the June 20, 2012 Council meeting.

The report on partnerships was tabled in order to make adequate time for agenda items (grant recommendations) requiring Council action. This agenda item will be incorporated into the December meeting.

### **Chair's Report**

Monty reported on attending a wonderful Kent County event—hosted by the Governor and First Lady—honoring Rosemary Twilley, who was inspired by Tatiana Copeland to establish the Kent County Fund for the Arts. The fund awarded over \$11,000 in grants in 2011 to qualified 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organizations in Kent County. Council members Rick Givens, Mack Wathen, and Cathy Walls were in attendance as well.

Monty reported attending an early September event at the Delaware Art Museum along with about 40 other people for an excellent poetry/art presentation. Five poets read poems inspired by the art of Mary Page Evans in the gallery where an exhibition of her art, aptly titled “Painted Poetry,” is on display. Mary Page was there, sharing interesting insights along with Poet Laureate JoAnn Balingit and Abby Millager, who was awarded an Artist Fellowship by the Division in 2009 in the Emerging Artist category.

Special thanks to Susan Salkin for so successfully converting our grant panel work to e-granting. The panels ran smoothly and efficiently.

### **Director's Report**

Grants update: 111 funded projects to date; Awarded = \$1,515,350; Remaining = 164,250; IAFs sent out to MAAF for processing (\$85,000 budgeted)

Artist Roster update: Staff working with Government Information Center to overhaul ArtistRoster.ArtsDel.Org to upgrade/expand features (FB, Twitter, Pinterest...)

Poetry/Writers Retreat: Sixteen writers will participate in a weekend writing retreat, Sept 27-30. Led by Poet Laureate.

Stewards of Children: Division is hosting a series of four workshops (Sussex, Kent, Newark, Wilmington). Stewards of Children is a prevention training program that teaches adults how to prevent, recognize, and

react responsibly to child sexual abuse. (Attorney General's Office, Prevent Child Abuse Delaware, and YMCA))

National Arts Program: Coming up this year from February 22 – March 20, 2013 at DSU Gallery. Art exhibit for state employees and their families. Notice was sent out through state HR departments last week. Last year nearly 250 participated.

Theatre for Sale: Purchase price for Milton Theatre was recently posted. Milton Development Corporation is exploring the possibility of buying back the facility, after losing the theatre a few years ago to foreclosure.

Technology upgrades: New computers for Wilmington office with upgraded software and operating systems are being installed. Upgrading software is complicating matters with grants management database, but all can be resolved.

FY2014 Budget: Process has just begun, with submission of budget narrative and contingency cuts (1% of FY13 budget). Council questioned if this was a good time to present a request to the Governor/Secretary of State to consider an increase in the budget. Weagraff and Monty will discuss a strategy for the Council to implement throughout the budgeting process.

FY14 Application to the National Endowment for the Arts: Three-year application cycle. "On-year" submission deadline for Delaware is October 1. Submitted last week. Will be reviewed in mid-January with announcements made in late spring 2013.

Reflections during NEA application preparation suggested that more targeted and specific efforts are warranted, specifically to:

- Examine the efficacy of current funding strategies for equity, geographic distribution, and public impact, and realign funding mechanisms accordingly
- Utilize financial information from arts organizations to better plan technical assistance initiatives that promote sustainability
- Implement more effective communication strategies to reach, engage, and support African-American and Hispanic constituents
- Engage in more substantive and intentional dialogue with the corporate and foundation communities to seek creative and coordinated funding strategies for the arts
- Review and revamp arts education programs to better align with, and capitalize on, *Race to the Top* initiatives

For your calendar

September 22-30, 2012	InWilmington Week, Wilmington
October 2, 2012	AEP IV Presentation, Schwartz Center, Dover
December 12, 2012	DSAC Meeting, New Castle County, TBD
Feb. 22 – Mar. 20, 2013	National Arts Program, DSU Gallery
March 6, 2013	Poetry Out Loud, Smyrna Opera House
October 28, 2013	Arts Summit 2013, Dover Downs Hotel and Casino

## Grant Funding Review

Delaware Symphony Orchestra

Weagraff summarized key points from Delaware Symphony Orchestra revised proposal

- Newly elected Board Chair – Tatiana Copeland
- Re-constituted board: half of the board is new
- Significant staff changes, including salary reductions

- Significantly smaller budget
- Proposal for Friday night and Sunday matinee concerts only
- Looking for venues in Kent and Sussex counties to expand audience (and reduce rental expenses)
- Have already sold 60% of Chamber Concert series seating
- Marketing will be more electronic and cost efficient

#### Discussion

- Council raised questions about funding DSO if programming doesn't materialize; i.e., what happens to grant money if DSO doesn't mount their classical series as proposed? Weagraff responded that payments would be made incrementally, as programming rolled out. If scope of programming is reduced, total grant award could be reduced accordingly.
- All are in favor of supporting DSO - the question is "how much"?
- There was a motion to fund at \$70,000, which was withdrawn in order to have open discussion about funding levels.
- Weagraff noted that funding the symphony at its previous budget size would formulaically have produced a grant award of approximately \$70,000. The newly proposed budget would result in a significantly smaller calculated grant.
- Council discussed a grant in the range of \$50,000 to \$70,000, based on the previous and projected size of the FY13 symphony budget.
- After discussion, a motion was made to recommend funding at \$60,000, with a meeting to be convened in January with symphony leadership to get an update on their programming.
- The motion to recommend funding at \$60,000 was seconded and passed: 7 in favor, 3 nays.
- Education Resource grant discussion was tabled for the December meeting, pending a resolution of the symphony's contract negotiations with the musicians' union.
- Council recommended that DSO work toward more statewide representation on their board. It was noted that this has been an ongoing recommendation and the current board list only has one representative south of the C&D Canal.

#### Clear Space Theatre

Weagraff introduced the discussion of Clear Space Theatre Company by pointing out that funding had been approved at the June 2012 council meeting for \$39,500 for general operating support, but the Division was notified in July of significant management changes and fiscal challenges. The Division decided to withhold funding, pending a subsequent review by the State Arts Council at the September meeting, requesting a revised proposal from Clear Space Theatre Company that reflected more accurately their current fiscal and management situation.

Council discussed the recent report submitted by Clear Space Theatre Company. The following concerns arose and actions were taken:

- Despite cut/reduced positions (down to 3 paid positions), savings in salary expenses did not seem to be significant
- Consultant recommended hiring of a new executive director as imperative, but given Clear Space's inability to restructure their budget, affording a director seemed unachievable.
- Negative net assets are \$180k and an additional \$100k loss is projected by year's end
- Lack of clarity in tracking their expenses (according to auditor's report) was disconcerting
- Management seems to be very problematic, regardless of the quality of programming and service to the community
- A motion was made and seconded not to fund Clear Space Theatre Company with general operating support in FY2013

- Discussion ensued about the value of their programming in Sussex County and the message that would be sent by not supporting them at all.
- Weagraff suggested that a targeted grant could be awarded to cover their most dire need: an interim executive director to implement a turn-around strategy. Consultant Pam Leland is still under contract with the Division and could assist in selecting the appropriate candidate
- The motion not to fund Clear Space Theatre Company with general operating support in FY2013 was approved.
- A motion was made, seconded and approved to offer Clear Space a technical assistant grant (not to exceed \$40,000) that would go specifically to an interim director's salary, for the purposes of developing a turn-around strategy, deficit-reduction strategy, and sustainable business plan.
- Division staff will meet with Clear Space Theatre Company representatives to present the proposal for an alternative grant.

### **Lunch Break**

**Presentation:** Mary Cahill gave an overview and tour of Possum Point Players.

### **Arts & Economic Prosperity IV Report**

Weagraff presented summary findings from the Arts & Economic Prosperity Report IV in preparation for the October 2<sup>nd</sup> Arts Mean Business Event (See attached Power Point slides)

Guillermina Gonzalez talked about the Arts Mean Business program coming up on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, being co-sponsored by the Division of the Arts and the Arts Alliance. She announced that Carla Markell is hosting the event and Governor Markell is attending as well. She encouraged the council members to each bring at least 5 other people.

To date there are over 150 registered to attend the event.

Rothschild requested:

1. DSAC members to meet and greet at event starting at 2 p.m.
2. Each member bring at least 2 -3 others from the business community

**Nominating Committee Report** – Ruth Sokolowski and Carson Zullinger are rotating off council at the end of the year. So far there is a pool of five people for the Governor's review. Sokolowski and Zullinger will remain on the Council until replacements are appointed.

**Announcement:** Anyone interested in doing an on-site evaluation of Pacem in Terris on October 5th, a program out of Baylor WCI, please contact Terry Plummer.

**Meeting adjourned 2:06 p.m.**